

Message Text

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STUTTGART 1307

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT GW

SUBJ: STRAUSS STIRS ELECTION POT IN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG

1. SUMMARY: BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG CDU MINISTER PRESIDENT FIL-BINGER AND CSU CHAIRMAN STRAUSS MET PRESS, INCLUDING MANY FOREIGN REPRESENTATIVES, ON 29 SEPTEMBER IN STUTTGART. BOTH EXUDED OPTIMISM THAT VOTING IN SOUTH GERMANY WOULD PROVIDE NECESSARY MARGIN FOR DECISIVE SWING TO CDU/CSU IN OCTOBER 3 BUNDESTAG ELECTION. STRAUSS IN STUTTGART DEFENDED HIMSELF AGAINST LOCKHEED SCANDAL ACCUSATIONS AND IN HEILBRONN INTENSIFIED COUNTERATTACKS ALLEGING CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, WHEN DEFENSE MINISTER, HAD WORKED OUT DEAL WITH PRINCE BERNHARD OF NETHERLANDS FOR SUBSTANTIAL PURCHASE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT. SEPTEMBER 30 MORNING EDITION HEILBRONNER STIMME APPEARED WITH BLACKED OUT PORTIONS OF STRAUSS CHARGES TO GUARD AGAINST SLANDER. END SUMMARY.

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2. AT STUTTGART PRESS CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 29 STRAUSS AND FILBINGER EXUDED OPTIMISM RE CDU ELECTION VICTORY. WHEN JOURNALISTS CITED POLLS TO THE CONTRARY, FILBINGER REPLIED OPPOSITION HAD FIGURES OF ITS OWN. FILBINGER PREDICTED VOTING IN SOUTH OF FRG WOULD BRING ABOUT DECISIVE SWING WITH BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG CDU EXPECING TO EQUAL APRIL LANDTAG VICTORY OF 56.7 PERCENT AND CSU IN BAVARIA APPROACHING ITS 62 PERCENT LANDTAG VICTORY OF 1974. IN SAME BOUYANT VEIN FILBINGER CLAIMED RHEINLAND-PFALZ COULD EXPECT A MAJROITY AND, FOR FIRST TIME, EVEN CDU IN HESSE HAD REAL CHANCE OF REACHING THAT GOAL.

3. LOCKHEED. STRAUSS CATEGORICALLY DENIED INVOLVEMENT WITH LOCKHEED OR REPORTED DISAPPEARANCE OF FILES, CALLING THOSE WHO INVENTED AND CIRCULATED SUCH STATEMENTS AS "PUPILS OF JOSEF GOEBBELS AND PURE CRIMINALS."

4. LATER IN DAY AT HEILBRONN GATHERING OF 15,000 PEOPLE, STRAUSS ALLEGED THAT SCHMIDT, WHEN DEFENSE MINISTER, HAD WRITTEN PRINCE BERNHARD OFFERING 100 MILLION MARKS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF A NORTHRUP-COBRA F-17 WEAPONS SYSTEM INTO THE NETHERLANDS.

5. SEPTEMBER 30 MORNING EDICTION OF HEILBRONNER STIMME WAS PUBLISHED WITH INKED-OUT HEADLINE AND OTHER PORTIONS AFTER SPD DECLARED IT WOULD GET INJUNCTION PREVENTING PUBLICATION OF THE PAPER REPORTING STRAUSS' CHARGES. SPD REPORTEDLY HAS NUMBER OF STATEMENTS UNDER OATH ATTESTING TO FACT THAT STRAUSS ACTUALLY MADE THE CHARGES AGAINST SCHMIDT AS REPORTED.

COMMENT: WHILE THE REASONING BEHIND THE STRAUSS MOVE AND THE SPD RESPONSE IS NOT COMPLETELY CLEAR YET, HIS APPEARANCE IN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG HAS MANAGED TO INTERJECT SOME 11TH HOUR SPICE INTO WHAT HAS HITHERTO BEEN A LOCALLY UNEVENTFUL BUNDESTAG CAMPAIG,. WHETHER THE CHARGE AGAINST SCHMIDT HAS BASIS OR NOT, IT MAY BE DESIGNED TO NEUTRALIZE THE LOCKHEED ACCUSATIONS AGAINST STRAUSS AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS. HIS ASSERTION AND THAT OF FILBINGER THAT THEY HAVE POLLS SHOWING THE BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG CDU AND CSU EQUALLING THEIR LANDTAG RECORDS MAY WELL BE STRETCHING THE TRUTH TO BOOST THE MOMENTUM OF CDU/CSU FORTUNES WHICH THEY HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CLAIM TO HAVE DETECTED IN FINAL PHASE OF CAMPAIGN. IT DOES NOT QUITE RING TRUE WHEN MEASURED AGAINST APPARENTLY SINCERE SPD EXPECTATION THAT IT WILL IMPROVE SOMEWHAT ITS DISAPPOINTING LANDTAG SHOWING OF 33.3 PERCENT AND FDP EXPECTATION THAT, REFLECTING THE APPEAL OF ITS NATIONAL LEADERSHIP, IT WILL ON SECOND LIST VOTING IMPROVE ON ITS FEEBLE 7.8 PERCENT LANDTAG VOTE. THESE COALITION ESTIMATES, COMBINED WITH LESS EBULLIENT CDU PROGNOSTICATIONS, SHOULD GIVE THE B-W CDU OUR EARLIER

PREDICTED 54-55 PERCENT, MEANING AN ADDITION OF 3-4 BUNDES-TAGS SEATS. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF FILBINGER AND STRAUSS ARE CORRECT (AND THEY WERE CORRECT IN LANDTAG PREDICTIONS, AND ASSERT CDU ALWAYS DOES 1-2 PERCENT BETTER THAN POLLS), CDU GAINS IN THE SOUTH, COUPLED WITH EQUIVALENT GAINS ELSEWHERE, COULD JUST PUT THE CDU OVER THE TOP. HOWEVER, DESPITE CURRENT CDU OPTIMISM ABOUT LOCAL RESULTS, WISEACRES OF OUR ACQUAINTANCE, AND WE OURSELVES, HESITATE TO ENDORSE THE SOUTHERN LEADERS' GENERALIZED OPTIMISM. JENKINS

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